

AETC News Clips



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31 Oct 01

Airport screening must fall into federal hands

In a world cursed with terrorists who are willing to hijack airliners and use them as weapons, airport passenger screeners play an important law enforcement function.



HUTCHISON

Not acknowledging the seriousness of the job is a short-sighted mistake, but it is one that the House Republican leadership and President Bush appear determined to make.

This is not a strictly partisan issue. The Senate voted 100-0 to make the 28,000 airport screeners federal employees with improved training standards and tougher background requirements.

Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas is one of the most vocal proponents of the Senate plan.

But House leaders have stubbornly insisted on a plan that leaves the screeners as employees of private companies. Federal officials would supervise the private screening operations under the House plan.

Their good intent is not in question. But the House plan will not solve the problem.

Under the Senate plan, a \$2.50 fee per airline ticket would pay for the 28,000 airport screeners who would be added to the federal pay-

Workers who screen passengers at airports are playing a vital law enforcement role.

roll.

A General Accounting Office report, detailed in an Associated Press report, revealed that the average turnover rate among privately employed screeners across the nation is 126 percent. Poor pay and a lack of professionalism are rampant.

The AP also noted the call for government takeover of the airport security role emerged in 1973 after a spurt of hijackings and again in 1988, when a terrorism commission appointed by the previous President Bush urged the move.

Even after the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, stories continue to surface about people who get through the screening process with guns in their possession.

Airport security — even its new tighter incarnation — is not good enough.

The House is scheduled to vote on its version of airline security legislation this week.

We urge South Texas congressmen of both parties to support a real solution and support federalizing airport screeners.

Express News

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DATE 31 Oct 01

Airline safety should be a federal duty

By KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

COMMENT

The primary responsibility of the Congress, spelled out in the Constitution, is "to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States." In the days since the atrocities of Sept. 11, all of us have had this obligation uppermost in our minds.

In years past, Congress has fulfilled this duty with the full force of our determination supporting military actions on foreign soil. But this time, the front lines are not just overseas — they are also at home.

On Sept. 11, the sentries defending the front lines were not on duty. We must rectify that lapse and prevent it from happening in the future. We must fortify our aviation security system.

Last year, we passed a law that required improved training and criminal background checks for screeners, and an increase in the number of checked bags screened for explosives. Due to lax enforcement and oversight, these common

sense reforms were not fully implemented. We heard that they were too costly and too difficult; the airlines and the FAA needed more time. On Sept. 11, our time ran out.

The reason for this unforgivable lapse is that security remains the financial and administrative responsibility of the airlines. Think about that. We have entrusted our national security to an industry that does not want this responsibility. They gave us only the security system they could afford.

Many of the private contractors retained by the airlines have careless hiring practices and pay low wages to their employees. This has resulted in a staggeringly high turnover rate among baggage screeners, the first line of our security defense.

These practices were an open door to disaster.

The airlines themselves have been telling Congress for decades that they should not have responsibility for security

The Aviation Security Act, passed unanimously by the Senate on October 11, would completely redefine aviation security in America.

The Senate bill secures cockpit doors and shifts responsibility for security functions to the Justice Department. We create a trained federal security force to screen passengers and their bags. Under the Senate bill, screeners must have been legally in the U.S. for at least five years, have a high school degree, be fluent in English, and undergo real training and testing before we rely upon them to protect us. They can be dismissed immediately if they fail to meet performance standards. They will not be allowed to strike, because they are essential law enforcement personnel.

There are some who argue our security can be assured by tightening standards and providing some more federal oversight. They are wrong. The federal government must assume the job of providing security, or we have admitted that we are satisfied with the status quo,

and thousands of souls will have died for nothing.

I am a conservative who believes in private enterprise. Nine times out of 10, privatization is a good thing. This is the 10th time. The legislative proposals seeking to put a Band-Aid on the current system are fundamentally flawed. Where is the efficiency of privatization if we train the screeners using federal personnel at a federal facility, then send the trained and tested employees to work for a private contractor?

No one would suggest contracting out the duties of the Border Patrol, Customs Service, or FBI. These are national security functions performed by federally-employed professionals.

Congress cannot shirk its duty to defend our nation. We will have empty flights until we meet this responsibility.

U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas is a member of the Senate Aviation subcommittee and has served as vice chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

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LAFB dedicates building to Cold War hero

ALEJANDRA VALDEZ
Staff Writer

The Operations Training Complex (OTC) was renamed the Anderson Hall in a ceremony held at Laughlin Air Force Base Friday afternoon.

The ceremony was to honor the memory of the late Cold War hero Maj. Rudolph Anderson Jr.

Exactly 39 years ago today, Anderson was shot down over Cuba by a Russian surface-to-air missile that exploded close to his aircraft. Anderson was the only American casualty during the 13 days of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. A U-2C pilot out of LAFB, Anderson was one of 11 pilots to fly the 10 aircraft in highly secret missions aimed at photographing Russian military-

strategic advances in Cuba.

At its beginning, the ceremony on the ground took a backseat to the U-2 thundering slowly above the OTC.

LAFB 47th Flying Training Wing Commander Col. Rick Rosborg introduced the guest speaker, Ret. Brig. Gen. Gerald E. McIlmoyle. Rosborg explained that the effort to memorialize and remember the sacrifice made by Anderson began with "a major and a captain" who first wished only for a small remembrance.

Rosborg claimed it was their tireless efforts and the pride of others at LAFB that grew into what was now being realized.

McIlmoyle was a friend of Anderson's, having both been

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News-Herald photo by Alejandra Valdez

Gary Powers Jr., of the Cold War Museum in Fairfax, Va., presented Jim Anderson and Robyn Anderson Lory with a piece of tin from their father's downed U-2C. Maj. Rudolph Anderson was killed during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Lory's children Anna and Christian are also pictured.

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ANDERSON

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stationed at Laughlin, lived across the street from each other on Avenue D in Del Rio, both flew the U-2 and both were instructor pilots. When Anderson was moved up to standardization pilot, McIlmoyle soon followed and worked under Anderson. Both pilots were asked to volunteer for the secret missions. Both pilots went.

McIlmoyle flew photographic missions over Cuba and night reconnaissance over the eastern Soviet Union.

"I'd like to paint a picture of the man I knew," began his fellow comrade-in-arms. "I remember Andy as a very professional pilot. Another pilot here had said that he truly admired him. He was asked to volunteer for a super secret, high altitude aircraft and he did so," said McIlmoyle.

"In August 1957, I lived across the street from Andy. We only had one car, so we rode to work together. We talked about flying, the U-2, family and Air Force careers... he made no mistakes, he was recognized as one of the best in the unit and selected as instructor pilot and standardization pilot," recalled McIlmoyle. The standardization pilot was the one who

checked that the equipment and the aircraft were being utilized to their highest potential and correctly used, McIlmoyle explained.

In 1962 Anderson became the Chief of Standardization. "Then I was chosen to work for Andy. Andy was a man of character who demanded of himself integrity and honesty. I personally looked at him as a mentor. That is probably the highest honor you can give a person," said McIlmoyle of his friend.

McIlmoyle recalled the night when the two pilots and another also from LAFB were told they were going to Edwards AFB and not told for how long or why. "A major general told us we were going to pick up the CIA U-2," said McIlmoyle. Two pilots McIlmoyle was friends with were there, but were not thrilled to see either Anderson or McIlmoyle because the aircraft were "theirs." "But President Kennedy put us there. It was said President Kennedy was upset over the Bay of Pigs the year before."

Missions were flown over Cuba after the training. Pilots were needed on stand-by for extra missions that were being scheduled on top of the ones



MCILMOYLE

already set.

McIlmoyle had just returned from a mission when all the pilots were called to a meeting, requesting mission volunteers.

"Andy volunteered to take that duty for the next day. Another pilot and I were playing golf. We both turned to look and watched. It was an absolutely clear bright blue day. We turned to each other and said 'I think Andy got a special mission.' We both said a special prayer for Andy. His special mission was to fly over a specific site being built by the Russians.

"I know that he was using all his skill and dedication to fly the best stable platform he could. Courageously and pre-

cisely doing his duty, he was struck down and paid the ultimate price for our freedom that we enjoy today.

"So Rudy, if you can hear me, when your nation needed you, you stood tall," McIlmoyle said, as his voice broke and listeners were taken by the tale of an American hero.

"We all thank you and we dedicate this memorial to you and the memory of you," said McIlmoyle as he walked away from the platform.

Other speakers included Gary Powers Jr. of the Cold War Museum in Fairfax, Va. Powers presented two of Anderson's grown children Robyn Anderson Lory and Jim Anderson, with a piece of time taken from their father's aircraft. The U-2 is in display in the middle of a plaza in Havana, Cuba.

Jim and Robyn, her husband, Stephen and their children Anna and Christian were at the ceremony.

A Masonic wreath was placed at the building site for Anderson, who had been a Mason. The wreath was presented by Del Rio Mason Jim Long.

Anderson's eight-year-old granddaughter Anna Lory made closing remarks after he father spoke.

"The stories I have heard have helped me know him. It is an honor to my grandfather that you still remember what he did," she said.

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NEWSMAKERS

News-Herald photo by Alejandra Valdez

Maj. Rudolph Anderson Jr.'s granddaughter Anna Lory Anderson and grown children Robyn Anderson Lory and Jim Anderson attended Laughlin Air Force Base's ceremony for the renaming of the Operations Training Complex to Anderson Hall. Anderson, the one casualty in the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 perished exactly 39 years ago Saturday when his U-2C was downed by Russians over Cuba. A U-2C pilot out of LAFB, Anderson was one of 11 pilots to fly the 10 aircraft in highly secret missions aimed at photographing Russian military-strategic advances in Cuba.



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